



“CHAPUNGU: Nature, Man, and Myth”

April 28 through October 31, 2007

ZIMBABWE AND THE SHONA PEOPLE

Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia)

- A land-locked country north of South Africa
- Slightly smaller than California
- Population approximately 13 million
- Several large cities. Capital is Harare, population 1.6 million
- Rich agricultural areas
- Extensive mineral wealth, from coal to gold
- Vast savanna with thousands of animals (elephants, giraffes, baboons, etc.)
- English is the official language. Most Zimbabweans speak at least one ethnic or tribal language as well.
- Colonized by the English in the 19th century.
- Zimbabwe won its independence through war in 1980.
- At this time Zimbabwe is experiencing economic depression.

Social Comment

Zimbabwe has had a similar history to all European colonies: wealth to the conquerors, poverty to the natives. Since their war of liberation (1966-1980), the native government led by Robert Mugabe has been corrupt and despotic.

Although Zimbabwe has good land, rich mineral resources and skilled workers, the economy is collapsing.

The Shona People

- Largest ethnic/tribal group in Zimbabwe (80%).
- Lived in Zimbabwe and surrounding countries in southern Africa for thousands of years.
- A rich culture that includes farming, hunting, and living in villages where large families stay together.
- Elders, especially women, are sources of wisdom and advice.
- Many now live in modern cities, and work as dress as we do in the U.S.; however, they maintain close relationships with each other and maintain the importance of the spirit world in their lives.
- The spirit world is very active and alive for the Shona, especially the spirits of animals and ancestors.
- Stone sculpting is a relatively recent means of expression by Shona people, although wood carving has been part of their rich culture for many years. Shona sculpture emerged on the art scene in the early 1960's when small workshops were encouraged by the Director of the National Art Gallery in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia).



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